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What's new in the Grapevine this week?

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- **Two tasty new wines**
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Art Walk this Friday

We hope you will be able to join us this Friday for the last Art Walk of the year.

I will again be serving the best wines on the Art Walk at **Miller's Jewelry at the corner of Tracy and Main**. Come on down and take a look at Miller's huge inventory of Yogo sapphire jewelry. These precious Montana stones are the most beautiful blue and will make a great gift as September's birthstone. You may not think about Miller's as an art venue but the beautifully crafted jewelry is certainly an esthetic expression if there ever was one. The folks at Miller's can custom design anything you want and you can see the finished product on a computer screen before you buy.

The Art Walk goes from 6-8 PM so be sure to stop by Miller's for a look at some Yogo sapphire jewelry. Of course, I will be there with six delicious wines to sample so bring your friends and check out the best location at the Art Walk.

Two new wines

This last month we added two new wines from Monterey, California. **Formation** wines showcase their Monterey terroir, and feature clean, pure fruit that is true to the varietal. The **Formations Pinot Noir** is beautifully long in rich, ripe black cherry flavors with hints of plums and vanilla. It exhibits an earthy complexity and balanced acidity. The smooth silky texture and mild tannins make this a versatile wine with food. **(\$15.50)**

The **Formations Chardonnay** was crafted to showcase the beautiful tropical fruit flavors that are the hallmark of Monterey Chardonnays, with ripe pear, pineapple, and citrus flavors and an undertone of minerality. Subtle notes of toasty oak and vanilla add complexity. **(\$15.50)**

To order either of these wines, just give us a call at 586-8828 or send an e-mail to bozemanwinegallery.com.

This Stuff Rocks!



Many people don't realize how important properly salted water is to their finished pasta dish. The Wine Gallery has a new product that takes the guesswork out of that task. Try our new **Pasta Rocks!** This is pink rock salt in chunks the size of a golf ball. This naturally harvested salt was deposited from ancient seas deep within the Himalayan Mountains. The pink color is from the naturally occurring trace minerals that are essential to our health.

How to use: Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Once boiling, add 1 pasta rock. Allow to cook for another 2 minutes then remove the rock and set aside for future uses (about 2-4 per rock). Now add pasta and cook according to package instructions. Your pasta will be perfect!

Pasta isn't **Pasta Rock's** only trick; it is also great for cooking rice, poaching eggs, boiling potatoes or blanching vegetables. **(\$8.95)**

Zero Tolerance?

Two weeks ago, there was quite a splash when a paper was published concluding that there is no safe level of alcohol consumption. The New York Times Health Watch published an analysis of that paper and they came to a different conclusion than the one blared out in the media. Here is a copy of the refutation:

“Last week a paper published by The Lancet claimed to be the definitive study on the benefits and dangers of drinking. The news was apparently not good for those who

enjoy alcoholic beverages. It was covered in the news media with headlines like “There is no safe level of alcohol”

The truth is much less newsy and much more measured.

It’s important to note that this study, like most major studies of alcohol, wasn’t a new trial. It was a meta-analysis, or a merging of data, from many observational studies. It was probably the largest meta-analysis ever done to estimate the risks from drinking for 23 different alcohol-related health problems.

The researchers also combined almost 700 sources to estimate the most accurate levels of alcohol consumption worldwide, even trying to find drinking that might otherwise be missed (from tourism, for instance). They then combined all this data into mathematical models to predict the harm from alcohol worldwide.

They found that, over all, harms increased with each additional drink per day, and that the overall harms were lowest at zero. That’s how you get the headlines.

But, and this is a big but, there are limitations here that warrant consideration. Observational data can be very confounded, meaning that unmeasured factors might be the actual cause of the harm. Perhaps people who drink also smoke tobacco. Perhaps people who drink are also poorer. Perhaps there are genetic differences, health differences or other factors that might be the real cause. There are techniques to analyze observational data in a more causal fashion, but none of them could be used here, because this analysis aggregated past studies — and those studies didn’t use them. We don’t know if confounders are coming into play because this meta-analysis could only really control, over all, for age, sex and location. That’s not the researchers’ fault. That’s probably all they could do with the data

But when we compile observational study on top of observational study we become more likely to achieve statistical significance without improving clinical significance. In other words, very small differences are real, but that doesn’t mean those differences are critical.

The news warns that even one drink per day carries a risk. But how great is that risk?

For each set of 100,000 people who have one drink a day per year, 918 can expect to experience one of the 23 alcohol-related problems in any year. Of those who drink nothing, 914 can expect to experience a problem. This means that 99,082 are unaffected, and 914 will have an issue no matter what. Only 4 in 100,000 people who consume a drink a day may have a problem caused by the drinking, according to this study.

At two drinks per day, the number experiencing a problem increased to 977. Even at five drinks per day, which most agree is too much, the vast majority of people are unaffected. I’m not advocating that people should ignore these risks. They are real, but they are much smaller than many other risks in our lives, and much less than the headlines would have you believe, especially at the levels that most agree are permissible.

For diabetes and heart disease, for instance, the risks actually go down with light or moderate drinking. The authors argue that this result is overrun, however, by risks for things like cancer and tuberculosis, which go up. But for many individuals, the risks for diabetes and heart disease are much higher than those for cancer and tuberculosis.

This message shouldn't get lost in any argument: There is no debate, and this study confirms once again, that heavy drinking is really bad for you. The population level average of daily drinks is 1.9 for women and 3.2 for men, according to the study. This is above U.S. government health recommendations, but it is probably skewed by those who drink heavily, a relatively small percentage of all people who drink.

Of course, some drink too much without knowing it. For this study, a drink was defined as 10 grams of pure alcohol, as much as you might get in one ounce of spirits (a small shot glass) that is 40 percent alcohol; 3.4 ounces of wine that's 13 percent alcohol; or 12 ounces of beer that's 3.5 percent alcohol. Many people consume more than that and consider it "a drink."

Moderate alcohol consumption is associated with certain improved risk factors for health (which this study confirms), but this is not the same as recommending that people drink. I don't, and I don't know of any health-related professional organizations that do. But just because something is unhealthy in large amounts doesn't mean that we must completely abstain. A chart in the study showed rising risks from alcohol from 0 to 15 drinks.

Consider that 15 desserts a day would be bad for you. I am sure that I could create a chart showing increasing risk for many diseases from 0 to 15 desserts. This could lead to assertions that "there's no safe amount of dessert." But it doesn't mean you should never, ever eat dessert.

Food is not medicine. Neither is alcohol. Alcoholism is terrible. There's a balance, and we could spend lifetimes arguing over where the line is for many people. The truth is we just don't know. We can still use these studies to argue that we might want to push people to be wary of overconsumption."

Collector's Corner

We often have deals on wines for everyday but if you want a special wine for a special occasion, there are only a few that will do. These great wines are spendy because they are rare and boast the highest ratings.

This week during Fall Housecleaning, we found a vertical (2008, 2009 and 2010) of the **Achaval Ferrer Finca Bella Vista Malbec**. The 2008 was rated 98 points by Wine Advocate The 2008 Finca Bella Vista has it all. Purple/black in color, it displays an exotic, sexy nose, dense layered fruit, and 5-7 years of aging potential. Satin-textured, mouth-coating, and very long in the finish, it will offer a drinking window extending from 2015 to 2028. Its younger brother also got 98 points "The 2009 Finca Bella Vista was sourced from a vineyard planted in 1910 giving a miserly yield of 0.75 tons per acre. It displays slightly blacker fruit, a bit more depth and opulence, and a finish that seems endless. It needs no cellaring at this point and will be great to 2030. The **2010** was **#10 on the Wine Spectator Top 100 of 2012**. **Achaval Ferrer Finca Bella Vista Malbec** has an alluring bouquet of incense, violets, black cherry and blackberry. This wine is voluptuous and lengthy. Dark and powerful, yet elegant, with a delicious core of crushed raspberry, blackberry and damson plum notes tightly woven with silky tannins. The minerally finish lingers on with layered flavors of wildflowers, melted licorice and spice box.

This trio is worth over well over \$350 when purchased individually I don't know where in the world you would find the set anywhere else. The Wine Gallery is selling the vertical set for **\$299.95** including the wood box.

We also have the last two vintages of **Spottswode Cabernet**. The **2014** vintage was **98 points from Wine Enthusiast** and **96+ from Wine Advocate**. It is certainly one of the wines of the vintage. Gorgeously opaque purple, it offers up notes of spring flowers, blueberries, blackcurrants, some baking spice and graphite. It is full-bodied, concentrated and rich, with layers of fruit. The wine builds and builds on the palate, with a long finish of over 45 seconds. This is a sensational 2014 to drink over the next 20+ years. **(\$194.95)**

The **2015 Spottswode Cabernet** has a beautiful nose of dried roses, lavender and Chinese five spice over a core of warm blackcurrants, kirsch and wild blueberries. The medium to full-bodied palate features the most amazing intensity of perfumed red, black and blue fruit flavors supported by exquisitely fine-grained tannins and seamless freshness, finishing with epic length and depth. This truly stunning Cab rated **100 points in Wine Advocate** and **99 points in Jeb Dunnock's review**. I think it will be a candidate for the **Wine Spectator Top 10 if not the #1 wine** of 2018. Due to Spottswode's past accolades, this vintage went up to \$225.

Yes, these wines are expensive but they are some of the best in the world. Think about them for Christmas, your daughter's wedding, a celebration, an anniversary or just a special dinner with family or friends.